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Report Highlights:

* Agricultural, forest, seafood exports up 3.1 percent in Q1 *Farmers sigh, workers on high as machines useless on wilted rice *United States Supports New Avian Influenza Prevention Programs *Vietnamese goods top sellers in Cambodian market *Vietnam moves to protect biodiversity

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Trade Report
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Welcome to "News Summary" from Vietnam, an occasional summary of issues of interest to the U. S. agricultural community. The report includes information that has been garnered during travel within Vietnam, reported in the local media, or offered by host country officials and agricultural analysts. Press articles are included and summarized in this report. Significant issues may be expanded upon in subsequent reports from this office. Minor grammatical changes have been made for clarification.

DISCLAIMER: Any press summary contained herein does NOT reflect USDA's, the U.S. Mission to Vietnam's, or any other U.S. government agency's point of view or official policy.

Agricultural, forest, seafood exports up 3.1 percent in Q1

Vietnam's agricultural, forest, and seafood products saw a 3.1 percent rise in export value in the first quarter of this year to hit \$3.47 billion, said the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The value of exports for seafood products declined 7 percent to \$744 million and fell 22.82 percent for forest products to \$572 million.

The nation saw a 10.5 percent year-on-year increase in tea export values, which hit \$29 million in the first quarter of this year, according to the General Statistics Office.

(Source: Viet Nam News, Apr.8)

Farmers sigh, workers on high as machines useless on wilted rice

Combine harvesters cannot cut drooping Mekong Delta rice plants weighed down by unseasonal rains, pushing farmers to pay exorbitant prices for field workers amid a regional labor shortage.

More than 1.5 million hectares of winter-spring wet rice are ready to be harvested in the delta, good news for laborers struggling to find jobs in a market now dominated by machinery.

(Source: Thanh Nien News, Apr. 9)

United States Supports New Avian Influenza Prevention Programs

PRESS RELEASE - HANOI, April 10, 2009 – The United States Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has contributed \$7.3 million in additional funding to support Vietnam's efforts to combat avian and pandemic influenza. The new assistance package was unveiled earlier this week in a project signing ceremony between Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the US implementing partner, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The agreements include a one-year extension of technical assistance to strengthen emergency preparedness for avian influenza to Vietnam to reduce the health risk to humans from avian influenza by controlling the disease in poultry. A second project is a two-year research project with \$4 million in U.S. government funding that will support Vietnam in developing a plan to move from mass vaccination to a longer-term, sustainable approach.

"Vietnam recognizes the need to develop a long-term strategy focusing on improved poultry management practices," said U.S. Ambassador Michael W. Michalak. "Through the new research activity launched today and other activities, we will work closely with the government, other donors and international organizations to help authorities move from mass vaccination to a more sustainable avian influenza strategy."

The United States is the largest avian influenza donor in Vietnam, contributing \$33.5 million between 2005 and 2008 to provide support to the Government of Vietnam for avian influenza

prevention and control activities through USAID, the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Additional avian influenza funding for 2009 is expected soon.

(Source - U.S. Embassy in Hanoi website; <http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/pr041009.html>;
April 10, 2009)

Post comment. This event was widely publicized in the Vietnamese press.

Vietnamese goods top sellers in Cambodian market

Vietnamese consumer goods topped sales in the Cambodian market last year for the second successive year with a turnover of \$988 million, putting Vietnamese goods ahead of those from China with \$784 million and Thailand with \$674 million.

Vietnamese consumer goods that dominate the Cambodian market include garments, electronics, processed foods, fruits, vegetables, medicines and cosmetics.

New urban areas in Cambodia are developing fast with supermarkets, hotels, entertainment complexes, convenience stores, and coffee shops. Business opportunities for Vietnamese companies and investors will increase along with urban development, experts say.

(Source: Viet Nam News, Apr. 9)

Vietnam moves to protect biodiversity

With less than three months to go until the day Vietnam's new Law on Biodiversity comes into effect, government officials and scientists across the country are preparing the ground for change.

One point in the new law is that "protecting biodiversity" should be interpreted as "regulating the use of the biodiversity", said Professor Djaja Djendoel Soejarto of University of Illinois at Chicago, who has collaborated with Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology since 1994.

Many different agencies are responsible for the use of natural resources; and the unified and stable law on biodiversity now would gradually change people's negative habits without prohibition, and bring about a better planning of maintaining and developing the country's biodiversity.

(Source: Viet Nam News, Apr. 9)

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